

TAPE INDEXNARRATOR Peter FlanniganINTERVIEWER Phyllis LotzPLACE Glory Ranch, Buell  
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DATE Feb. 8, 1981

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Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Peter Flannigan

Interviewer: Phyllis Lotz

Transcriber: Phyllis Lotz

Date of Interview: 8 Feb. 1981, Glory Ranch, Buellton

PL: Tell me about yourself and why you came to the  
Santa Ynez Valley?

Mr. F: Well, why I came was my father always wanted a  
ranch, he made this deal for this piece of property  
at Nojoqui. My father was a hard worker but he  
never figured how he was going to pay off his debt.  
And he had that trouble all his life. I came up to  
straighten things out.

I was born in Ventura in 1795, (he really means  
1895)

PL: Where were your parents from?

Mr. F: Iowa, and they farmed there. I don't know why they  
came to California. In Ventura they worked mostly  
at contract team work, for the city and other jobs  
around.

PL: How many children in your parents family?

Mr. F: Four, I had three sisters, I am the third in the  
family. I went to school in Ventura through high  
school.

PL: How much of the Nojoqui Rancho did your father buy?

Mr. F: 135 acres. It went to Nojoqui Creek and south to a  
little further than the house. And north as far as  
the Pork Palace.

PL: Did your father bring all the family here?

Mr. F. Eventually, but not at the beginning. He came up first, then I came and later the women folk.

PL: Where did you live?

Mr. F. In the old adobe, just to the side of our house. It was one of the original homes of the grantees, I think the man's name was Valencia. Carrillo did not hold on to land very long.

PL: It must have been tough here without your women folk?

Mr. F. No, we were used to that. We brought all the horses up in 1914.

My father brought the property from the Smith Brothers, they were in Santa Barbara. We grew grain and hay.

All there was when we came was the adobe.

PL: Did the road, Hwy. 101 go by here then?

Mr. F. There was no highway, we had a dirt road that took us all the way to Santa Barbara. There were no bridges. Originally there was an owner that owned that part of the deed up next to the hill where the highway goes through, and there was an adobe house there. At Gaviota. He lived there and took care of all the business of the water front. I used to know him but that was a great many years ago and I can't remember now.

PL: How long were you and your father here together?

Mr. F. Several years before the women folk came. I used

to be a pretty good cook.

PLI: What work did you do?

Mr. F: Farming with horses, and it took all our time. We raised beans, mostly. Beans have changed over the years, when we first came we raised pink beans. Then we branched out into baby limas and other kinds of beans. We grew some for the seed companies. Burpee was one company, and Denholm.

PLI: Was it profitable?

Mr. F: No, too much experimentalization. You had no knowledge of what bean would do well here so you took chances. It was just an experiment whether you made anything or not. The company furnished the seed, and we had good years and bad years. We furnished all the labor, and then we went into grains which was pretty profitable.

PLI: Who did you sell your grains to?

Mr. F: Commercial men from Santa Barbara or stock men from the Valley. The Hunts, the Fields. I gave a branding iron to the Historical Museum that had belonged to Ezra Fields, and how I came about it was, I had a friend in Buellton who ran a liquor store, his wife did most of the work, and he liked to get around the country side to look for relics. So he came in with this Fields branding iron, he had found it on a junk pile on the Zaca Ranch. When he got along in years he gave it to me and I

recently gave it to the Museum.

PL: What can you tell me about Ezra Fields?

Mr. F: He was pretty stout, a very nice man, and always good to his help. He had some daughters who married men in Santa Maria. The Zaca Ranch ran from Zaca Lake to Los Alamos. It was a big operation. That branding iron is one of the oldest brands in the Valley. My brand is the Bar F 3. I designed it myself. My neighbor across the road had an F on his brand so if I wanted an F, I had to change mine a little.

PL: Your neighbor is Mr. Fillipini?

Mr. F: Yes, and he has been here for a long while. One of his ranches, the Loma Rosa, out of Buellton, was named by me.

PL: How did that come about?

Mr. F: Well, there was this man in Los Angeles and we got friendly back and forth and he wanted to get a piece of property here and of course I had heard that this property was for sale, the Rudolph place, so I got in touch with him and got him with the Rudolphs and they made a deal and then he wanted to know what to name the property. I got to thinking that it was part of the Santa Rosa Rancho, so asked him why he didn't call it the Loma Rosa, and it stuck.

PL: Back to your ranch, did you take over here?

Mr. F: Yes, and we went through quite a mess, as I did not want to loose this ranch.

(At this point, Mr. Flannigan gets out the record book, County Records of the Nojoqui Ranch, and we see that the original spelling is NAJOQUI.

PL: The book says Edwardo de la Cuesta has 82 acres here?

Mr. F: He stole that! It goes back into history. This says Raimundo Carrillo was the first grantee, then Cordero, Pico, Avila, and many other names. The ranch was all fenced when we came, it had to be. I know the off-hand history of all these families. I ran into a lot of them in my younger years.

PL: What do you do with the adobe now?

Mr. F: Just for storage. There are four rooms. Whoever was here before us covered it up to keep it from melting away. It used to stand out into the garden here but during the bad years Gerry de la Cuesta and his wife came and wanted to build that house on top of the hill so they aquired the two ends of this adobe, this happened before I came. As far as I can guess this adobe was at one time much larger. It was a post office when the stage line used to stop here. The stage from Goleta and Santa Barbara. I was told this adobe was a post office and the next stop north was Buell's ranch.

End of Side 1, Tape 1

Begin Side 2, Tape 1

PL: We were talking about your selling grain, I guess you farmed on Linus Buell's ranch?

Mr. F: No it was his to sell or feed to the hogs, he raised a lot of hogs, no dairy cows or cattle. The old dairy house used to be right across from Emma Buell's house on Central Ave. I farmed a lot up there. We had machines that we could work the hilly land. And we had leveling devices on these machines.

PL: Tell me about your sisters?

Mr. F: One married a man from Ventura, one married a plumber from Solvang, but I can't remember these things.

PL: How did you meet your wife?

Mr. F: At the Alisal Ranch.

Mrs. F: I was a maid there after teaching in Arroyo Grande I became ill and had to have a job so came to the Alisal. I started to teach in Arroyo Grande in 1922 and married another school teacher, we were married 20 years. He died and I came to Lompoc to live with my parents. I was born in Lompoc, in La Salle Canyon, where my father farmed.

PL: This house you live in now, how old is it?

Mrs. F: It was built 11 years ago. We lived in the adobe before that, 14 years in the adobe. It very warm in the winter, and cool in the summer. We had gas heat, and an electric stove. The reason we had this house built was that the adobe wall fell out.

Mr. F: The Native Daughters wanted to make this adobe a historic landmark, but I said no. It would mean lots of people coming around. I rebuilt the wall that fell out so its all intact now.

PL: Do you have children, Mrs. Flannigan?

Mrs. F: Yes, three, my son is a principal of a school in Mt. View, he has 20 teachers and 500 students to look out for. He has two sons. My daughter Gertrude, lives in Lompoc and works in a flower shop, her husband has retired from Johns-Manville, and they have four children. Bessie ran a school of her own, but now teaches in the public schools in Lompoc, she has three children, and they all come to see us.

Mr. F: I'm the only bad wolf in the family.

PL: You have seen many changes in the Valley, did you enjoy dances and parties?

Mr. F: We raised a lot of money for the restoration of the mission. I remember Father Buckler and his niece Mame Goulet, she always had her flowers.

Mrs. F: We have a rose bush from the mission that is 100 years old and is still blooming.

Mr. F. There was an old brother that I used to help around the mission, Brother Alexis. He used to go by here on the way to Las Cruces to take hot baths in the hot springs there. Father Buckler was a pretty rough character, he wasn't afraid to tell you off.

PL: People are farming a lot differently now, they can cover more territory, it that good?

Mr. F: Sure it good, and now they have irrigation. In my day it was all dry farming. A man who had a few pieces of equipment and a horse or two could make a living and if he had a few children to help him, then it didn't cost him too much. My grandfather Flannigan freighted all over the United States. He settled in Wisconsin and raised horses and then he would make a trip to California, going back by way of the Isthmus of Panama to the Mississippi River and up to Wisconsin. Why he never found a Spanish girl to marry and settle in California I don't know. My mothers' people acquired land in Ireland. They must have done something for the crown as they had a large estate there. I never heard any stories about that. When my grandfather was a young man, he went to the county fair to sell a pig he had raised, he sold it and kept the money. Then he signed on as a butcher on a sailing ship bound for America. He never went back home. His name was never when back home. His name was Michael

Flannigan. He lived to be 96, was drivin a surrey into town one day and had a heart attack.

PL: Any of the old timers you remember?

Mr. F: Old man Nosser at Nojoqui, he was a character.

PL: When you worked at the Alisal, Mrs. Flannigan, who owned the ranch?

Mrs. F.: Mr. Jackson, and the Gilliams were managers. I had the cottages to take care of and many movie people came to stay. I liked June Allison best and Van Johnson. Joan Crawford came once to work on scripts and told me not to disturb her, she had brought her children with her, and they had lots of things to do at the ranch.

PL: Mr. Flannigan, if you had a bad year, how did you pay your bills?

Mr. F: You let them ride but in a good year you could then pay up. You could loose your land over a bill. We sold all the property except five acres around the house and adobe, to some ladies, but now the Grahams have it and board horses, called the Glory Ranch. When we were in the Depression, I had to put the land in bankruptcy, and then got it out, paid it off. The war helped bring us out. The Federal Land Bank had low interest rates and that helped us.

PL: Thanks to both of you for letting me come today for this interview.